

Health and Human Services Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 14, 2010 3:30 PM
Scott Heyman Conference Room

Approved 8/11/10

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Frank Proto	Chair	Present	
Will Burbank	Member	Present	
James Dennis	Member	Present	
Kathy Luz Herrera	Member	Late	3:55 PM
Nathan Shinagawa	Member	Present	

Staff: J. Mareane, County Administrator; P. Carey, Department of Social Services; N. Zahler, Youth Services; L. Holmes, Office for the Aging; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk

Legislator: M. Robertson, Chair

Guests: Dr. Theodore F. Them, Guthrie Clinic, Ltd.; Kevin Romer, Town of Ulysses; Richard Driscoll, Town of Newfield Supervisor; Ric Dietrich, Town of Danby Supervisor; Jennifer Tiffany, Danby Gas Drilling Task Force; Marjory C. Bitzer, Emergency Medical Coordinator – Town of Danby; Maria Coles, City of Ithaca; Stacey Shackford, Ithaca Journal

Call to Order

Chair Proto called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. He thanked Mr. Shinagawa for requesting Dr. Them speak to the committee. Introductions were made at this time.

Changes to Agenda

Mr. Proto moved all action items to the first portion of the meeting.

Minutes Approval

It was MOVED by Mr. Shinagawa, seconded by Mr. Burbank, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to accept the minutes of June 09, 2010, as presented. MINUTES APPROVED.

Chair's Report

Mr. Proto said there would be an update on the Public Health Director Search on July 15th. With regard to the Youth Services Director search, a decision is being made on the next round of interviews with Mr. Estes, Deputy Personnel Commissioner setting dates. A meeting of human service agencies will be scheduled to discuss budget impacts. The Committee will also need to schedule a special meeting(s) of the Committee to review the impact assessment forms for Departments.

County Administrator's Report

Mr. Mareane asked Committee members to review the impact assessment forms submitted. An update on the budget reflecting actions by the State should occur within the next week. The agency impact assessment forms should be handed into his office by the end of the week or early next week.

Youth Services

Budget Adjustment - 2010 State Aid Cuts - Youth Services (DOC ID: 2051)

Ms. Zahler said the budget adjustments reflect cuts made by New York State after the County budget was approved. It represents approximately a 4 percent reduction in revenue and the reductions were reduced accordingly.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	James Dennis, Member
SECONDER:	Will Burbank, Member
AYES:	Frank Proto, Will Burbank, James Dennis, Nathan Shinagawa
EXCUSED:	Kathy Luz Herrera

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Manual Policy 05-02, budget adjustments exceeding \$5,000 require Legislative approval, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the Director of Finance be directed to make the following budget adjustments on his books:

Youth Services

Revenue:	7022.43820	Programs for Youth	-\$10,748
Revenue:	7023.43820	Programs for Youth	-\$ 3,846
Revenue:	7028.43820	Programs for Youth	-\$10,482
Revenue:	7029.43820	Programs for Youth	-\$ 2,540

Appropriation:	7022.54400	Program Expenses	-\$ 7,825
Appropriation:	7023.54400	Program Expenses	-\$ 5,831
Appropriation:	7026.54400	Program Expenses	-\$ 4,716
Appropriation:	7028.54400	Program Expenses	-\$ 6,704
Appropriation:	7029.54400	Program Expenses	-\$ 2,540

Explanation: Budget adjustment is needed since state aid available for contracted youth programs run by agencies and municipalities was reduced for 2010 beyond the projected cuts that were included in the approved 2010 County Budget. State aid is assigned by the Department to contracts in several different program accounts. Even though, by account, revenue and appropriation reductions are not the same number, overall, reductions in appropriations (\$27,616) equals the total being reduced in state aid (\$27,616).

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Office for the Aging

Rollover Request (DOC ID: 2096): Request to Use Certified Rollover Funds - 2010

Ms. Holmes explained the request of \$12,697 for the EISEP program would resolve an accounting error and increase the number of elderly clients served. The request for \$25,000 will assist in the purchase of updated equipment at the Emergency Dispatch Center to maintain and improve the PERS service and provide a backup system.

Mr. Mareane said he has reviewed the 2010 requests to assure they are necessary expenses. With respect to 2011 funding he is not recommending use of one-time rollover funds to support recurring costs and that they be targeted to high-priority one-time items, however, the Legislature has the latitude to determine what action to take.

Ms. Herrera arrived at this time (3:55 p.m.).

In response to Mr. Burbank's question about the internal accounting discrepancy, Ms. Holmes indicated the problem was due to information input in a large database. The number of clients being served determined by a formula in the program. Half way into 2010 the discrepancy was found and required a reduction of hours available to assist clients. At this time the Information Technology Services is assisting in correcting the problem. Due to the high need in this area the request will correct this error and allow services to be provided to more clients.

RESULT:	RECOMMEND [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	James Dennis, Member
SECONDER:	Nathan Shinagawa, Member
AYES:	Proto, Burbank, Dennis, Luz Herrera, Shinagawa

Office for the Aging

\$12,697 Funds would be applied to the EISEP program to purchase needed hours of home care for frail elderly clients, in order to make up for an internal accounting discrepancy in County funding for the EISEP program in 2010. This will help to address the waiting list of 29 clients for the EISEP program

\$25,000 Funds to be used for digital dialer alarm receiver and monitoring equipment at the Department of Emergency Response. This equipment will provide redundancies in the Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) equipment, insuring that 600+ frail elders with PERS machines are adequately covered by dispatch

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Mental Health Department

Suicide Prevention Bridge Barriers (DOC ID: 2112)

Mr. DeLuca reported there would be a meeting between Cornell University and the City of Ithaca this evening to discuss continuation of the bridge barriers erected as a result of multiple suicides. The Mental Health Services Board is encouraging Cornell and the City of Ithaca to allow the barriers to remain and they noted this is an opportunity to provide collaborative long-term planning on the issue.

Mr. DeLuca said a County resident facing a family crises became very depressed and went to the bridge location. Due to the barrier, time was provided for appropriate emergency personnel to arrive and assist him.

Ms. Coles said Common Council has received reports from Cornell University showing the connection between the barriers and suicide reduction, however, the information clearly states it is not conclusive. She believes if the bridge barriers limit the chances of an individual committing suicide it would be worth it; however, there are other Common Council members agree they are worth the loss of the aesthetic view. Ms. Coles noted the University reported there was a suicide not involving bridges on campus. Although it is a complicated situation, she supports the barrier on the bridge.

Ms. Herrera said the Mental Health Community and Suicide Prevention professionals, due to the nature of the tragedies, have taken this opportunity to educate the public. She expressed appreciation to Common Council for discussing the topic.

Mr. Proto said he is supportive of Mr. DeLuca's efforts. Mr. DeLuca said it is a complicated issue, which he appreciates Common Council addressing.

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Clinic Restructuring (DOC ID: 2114)

Mr. DeLuca reported on additional information compiled regarding the State Clinic restructuring amending the model for Medicaid billing. Following a review, he noted there are some strengths and weaknesses with the changes, however, overall he does not believe it will adversely affect his department. In response to Mr. Proto's question regarding whether the change in the model is due to Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) changes, Mr. DeLuca said it is not. The recent reductions to the Mental Hygiene budget in the amount of \$151 million are primarily at the State level. It does not appear funds tied to capital projects are affected, although funding for supportive services may have reductions.

Mr. Rudd of Cayuga Medical Center said he knows there will be reductions in the Medicaid rates from the State. Until a State budget is in place he will not know the full impact of reductions and other changes.

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Special Presentation Gas Exploration and its Effect on Health and Human Services Agencies (DOC ID: 2106) - Dr. Them

Dr. Them spoke as a trained chemist, an internist, and a specialist in occupational medicine, regarding public health issues. He noted since he spoke to the Public Safety Committee the risks for our community has more than doubled due to the Utica Shale that has been recognized as a second major gas reserve from Quebec, Canada, to Maryland. He noted the following areas that normally accompanies gas drilling operations:

- An increase in the number of people residing within the County will increase the same type of events and needs that require assistance from emergency responders and social services.
- The gas drilling industry has a death rate eight times the national average (32 people per 100,000 in the industry), although high, other industries such as fishing in Alaska and the logging industry are higher.
- Due to the increase in residents it can be expected to see an increase in the following areas:
 - Drug and alcohol related incidents
 - Additional traffic within the County
 - Noise and light pollution
 - Violations of local hunting and fishing regulations
 - Social Services caseloads
 - Housing shortages
 - Increase in property assessments due to demand
 - Increase in rent due to demand
 - Potential of a 200 percent increase in public school student population
 - Overall increase in the same type of medical/emergency situations presently happening in the County (motor vehicle accidents)
 - An increase in infections may happen due to the commuting of workers.

Dr. Them spoke of other factors specific to the gas drilling operations:

- Gas drilling companies are committed to repair roadways damaged by their vehicles, although it is an ongoing effort.
- “Christmas Trees”, which is the portion of the well’s pipe visible on the surface.
- One gas drilling operation built housing for workers and utilizes 75 shuttle buses to take workers to and from well sites.
- The gas drilling companies are very strict and have a 10:00 p.m. curfew for workers; if violated they are let go.
- There are approximately 150 jobs per well. Once in operation there will be approximately 15 jobs. When there is a reduction of output of a well, the fracture process may reoccur.
- With regard to chemicals used in the fracturing process, the higher risk is above ground; when in the ground the concentration level is .1 percent.
- In the event of a blowout of a well, the gas companies would call in emergency responders; they need to work under the direction of the site manager. It is important to meet and become familiar with the sites and protocol.
- There is a 9 to 1 ratio of blue-collar workers versus white-collar workers.
- Currently, medical needs of the workers located in Pennsylvania are for such things as fractures, cuts, blunt trauma, rabies exposure, bee stings, snakebites, and radiation (sunburn).
- Many of the workers are on a two-week on/two-week off work schedule.
- The gas workers are seeking after-hour medical care.

Dr. Them spoke of a variety of chemicals being present in homes and throughout the community and how they are accepted as part of life. As more chemicals are present the community will learn to deal with their presence. He spoke of having seen one case of a chemical burn associated with gas drilling and one case of chemical asphyxiation due to a leak, both patients are now fine. He explained the concern is with the dose of the chemicals, not the chemical itself. Dr. Them spoke of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) not providing all information on chemical content, it is not required if it is proprietary information. The chemicals being sent into the wells will be heated to more than two-hundred degrees, however will not boil. The major concern is reactions that can occur with methane that could cause a fire. If there is a fire it requires a special expertise as was seen in Iraq; the possibility of hazards if not properly put out are many.

Ms. Coles asked about what would happen to the water removed from the wells. Dr. Them said there are several methods of disposal; most water recovered has low toxicity and concentration. When the water is removed it is placed into pits, by evaporation the solids and some chemicals remain, which goes to landfills. If they should leak there is the potential of getting into the groundwater. Ms. Coles asked how can a wastewater treatment plant treat this water if it is not known what the chemicals are. Dr. Them said it is a difficult situation; the chemicals being used are common chemicals that can be found in wastewater streams in low concentrations.

Ms. Robertson asked what percentage of the water used in the drilling process is consumptive use versus what goes back into the ecosystem. Dr. Them did not know the answer and noted for water that does come out the evaporation process would put it back into the ecosystem.

Mr. Dennis was excused at this time (5:00 p.m.).

In response to a question regarding timeframe before the full effect of gas drilling operations would be in our area, Dr. Them said he believes it would be 4-5 years. Ms. Coles expressed concern that a potential need to increase public safety staffing levels would put a long-term burden on local

governments. Dr. Them said estimates are that gas drilling in these areas could range from 10 years to 100 years.

In response to a question regarding potential social problems Dr. Them directed interested parties to do an internet search on "Barnett Shale, Denton/Ft. Worth, social impacts" for detailed information. With regard to the two-week work cycles, Dr. Them said the industry is recognizing a fatigue cycle taking place, which could result in higher accident rates. In response to Ms. Schlather's question about potential needs of the gas drilling employee's children it was noted that the families are generally healthy but that there will be some special needs in language and literacy.

Dr. Them provided the contact name of Tom Brandt at Robert Packer Hospital to obtain specific information on his training employees.

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Youth Services

Budget Transfer - Computer Software (DOC ID: 2047)

The Committee received a copy for information only.

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2011 Youth Board Funding Recommendations (DOC ID: 2104)

Ms. Zahler provided a summary of the 2011 Youth Board funding recommendations. Following the review, the 6.9 percent Target reduction in the amount of \$79,193, was made in a proportional fashion in the areas of planning and coordination, agencies, municipalities, and the Recreation Partnership. As a result of reductions, hundreds of youth will not be served in agency programs and it is anticipated there will be resulting staff reductions. The Board is looking at 2011 as a planning year for the department.

Ms. Zahler spoke of the State's requirement to complete a community-based needs assessment to develop goals and priorities for funding and planning. This will be completed in collaboration with the Department of Social Services. The Youth Board feels it is a necessary tool since the same programs have operated for the past four years. In the event a program is not desired to be continued, a reconfiguration of priorities and programming would be required.

Mr. Proto said the Recreation Partnership met yesterday and have decided not to request any increase in funding for 2011. They are still looking to find approximately \$1,000 additional for their budget; if they are unable to find additional revenue they may use their fund balance. An over target request may be necessary to bring the amount up to the current level of funding as a result of the 6.9 percent reductions.

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Department of Social Services

Monthly Statistics - May 2010 (DOC ID: 2063)

Ms. Carey reported the number of Medicaid and Food Stamp cases rapidly increased, with ten new applications daily. Each staff member is handling in excess of 500 cases and due to the budget constraints she is opting not to fill positions becoming vacant, which will be eight positions by fall. At this time the allocation notice from Office of Children and Family Services has not been received so it is not possible to determine what funding would be provided. She will be traveling to Albany on Monday and hopes to obtain more information. It is also unknown what the weekly share of Medicaid will be, once he figure is received it would be billed back to October 2009. She commended her staff for their efforts to assist in how to serve clients during this difficult period. In response to Mr. Burbank's question,

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the reduced staffing may mean a longer period to make application determinations. It was also noted the positions remaining vacant are mostly Social Welfare Examiners and some Caseworkers.

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Discussion Regarding Breast Cancer Screening Recommendations (DOC ID: 2107)

Mr. Shinagawa said originally it was thought a resolution should be written in support of continuation of breast cancer screening for women 40-49 and that insurance companies should not take the recent recommendation extending the age for screening as a means to decline insurance payments. In discussions with the Cancer Research Center of the Finger Lakes, he was informed that Federal Legislation bill HR971 passed the House with a 426 to 0 vote. This bill states the recently amended guidelines would not prohibit services and should not be used to deny insurance claims. He believes there is a Senate companion bill that will be coming forward shortly.

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Office for the Aging

Budget Adjustment - III-E Respite (DOC ID: 2109)

The Committee received a copy for information only.

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Youth Services Special Project

Ms. Zahler provided a brief report on the special project that was done during the Grassroots Festival in Trumansburg. Youth assisted in placing special stickers on all alcoholic beverages sold in retail stores in Trumansburg calling attention to the fact it is illegal to purchase alcohol for minors. In addition, almost all stores allowed the placement of posters with the same message.

Special Meeting Discussion

Members discussed the need to set dates for a review of the impact assessment forms and agreed to meet July 28th and 29th from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk.